



Student Grievance Handling Policy and Procedure

1 Preliminaries

Commencement

1.1 This policy and procedure commenced on 1 April 2024.

Purpose

1.2 This policy and procedure outlines how the Australian Guild of Education (“AGE”) will operate an effective, timely, fair and equitable grievance handling system, which is easily accessible to all complainants. The grievance handling process is designed to ensure that AGE responds effectively to individual cases of dissatisfaction.

Application

1.3 This policy and procedure apply to all students at AGE, and to all staff involved in student grievance handling however, this policy does NOT cover the review of results for assessments tasks or the review or appeal of final unit grades. Please see the *Assessment Policy and Procedure* for details on how to request a review of results or request a review or appeal of final unit grades.

2 Definitions

The following definitions apply in this document:

Complainant applies to current students of AGE and for non-academic grievances additionally includes persons seeking to enrol with AGE.

Grievance is a person’s expression of dissatisfaction with any aspect of AGE’s services and activities, including both academic and non-academic matters. Grievances of an academic nature include issues related to student progress, assessment, curriculum and awards in a course of study. Grievances of a non-academic nature cover all other matters, including grievances about the personal information that AGE holds concerning an individual.

Respondent is the member of staff responding to a grievance on behalf of AGE. For formal grievances the respondent cannot be the person who made the decision in the first place.

Reviewable decision is a decision made by AGE that is mandated in legislation to be able to be appealed to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal. For AGE this applies to a decision regarding re-crediting a FEE-HELP balance.

Victimisation means subjecting or threatening to subject another person to any detriment because that person, in good faith, has lodged a grievance.



3 Policy Statement

3.1 This policy and procedure supports AGE's commitment to:

- (a) develop a culture that views grievances as opportunities to improve the organisation and how it works;
- (b) set in place a grievance handling system that is client-focussed and helps AGE to prevent grievances from recurring;
- (c) ensure that any grievances are resolved promptly, objectively, with sensitivity and with complete confidentiality;
- (d) ensure that the views of each complainant and respondent are respected and that any party to a grievance is not victimised; and
- (e) ensure that there is a consistent response to grievances.

3.2 A grievance can be defined as a person's expression of dissatisfaction with any aspect of AGE's services and activities, including both academic and non-academic matters. Grievances may relate to the following:

- (a) the enrolment or induction/orientation process;
- (b) the quality of education provided;
- (c) academic issues, including student progress, assessment practices, curriculum and awards in a course of study;
- (d) the handling of personal information and access to personal records; and
- (e) the way someone has been treated.

3.3 Complainants are entitled to access the grievance procedures set out in this policy regardless of the location of the campus at which the grievance has arisen, the mode of study or place of residence.

3.4 During all stages of the grievance handling process, AGE will take all steps to ensure that:

- (a) the complainant and any respondent will not be victimised;
- (b) the complainant has an opportunity to formally present their case;
- (c) each party to a grievance is advised of their right to be accompanied and assisted by a support person at any relevant meetings;
- (d) a full explanation in writing for decisions and actions taken as part of the process will be provided if so requested by the complainant or a respondent;
- (e) where the internal or external grievance handling or appeal process results in a decision that supports the complainant, AGE will immediately implement any decision and/or corrective and preventative action required and advise the complainant of the outcome; and



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- (f) the complainant has access to the internal stages of this grievance procedure at no cost.
Costs for an external appeal will be shared equally by AGE and the complainant.

3.5 AGE will respond to any complaint or appeal an international student makes regarding their dealings with AGE, an education agent or any other third party.

4 Responsibilities

All staff and students involved in a grievance handling process have responsibility to maintain the confidentiality of all parties except to share information with relevant parties.

5 Procedures

Informal Grievance Resolution

- 5.1 Complainants are encouraged, wherever possible and appropriate, to resolve concerns or difficulties informally with the person(s) concerned. There are staff available to assist the resolution of issues at this level.
- 5.2 All AGE staff will undergo training as part of the induction program to ensure that they are aware of the requirements to apply this policy.
- 5.3 Complainants may raise an informal grievance by contacting the administration in person or by phoning the Head Office and asking to speak to the Registrar (or the Equivalent Officer).
- Where the informal grievance is about the Registrar (or the Equivalent Officer) or their decisions, write to support@guildmusic.edu.au and ask to be contacted by the Compliance, Quality and Risk Manager.
- 5.4 Students who do not feel safe or confident to take such action may seek assistance from the Registrar (or the Equivalent Officer) or the Compliance, Quality and Risk Manager for advice and support, or to initiate action on their behalf.
- 5.5 Where students are dissatisfied with the informal grievance resolution, they may raise either a formal non-academic grievance or a formal academic grievance. It is not mandatory for informal complainants to raise a formal grievance.

Stage One: Formal Non-Academic Grievance

- 5.6 Formal non-academic grievances must be submitted in writing and marked to the attention of the Registrar (or the Equivalent Officer) as follows:

The Registrar (or the Equivalent Officer)
Australian Guild of Education
376 Victoria St,
North Melbourne,
3051, VIC



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- Where the non-academic grievance is about The Registrar (or the Equivalent Officer) or their decisions the grievance is to be addressed to:

The Academic Director
Australian Guild of Education
376 Victoria St
North Melbourne
3051, VIC

- Complainants may use the Student Grievance and Appeal Form or write an email or letter. The complainant should contact support@guildmusic.edu.au and request the private email address of the CEO.

5.7 Receipt of the grievance will be acknowledged in writing. The grievance handling process will commence within ten (10) working days of the receipt of the formal grievance. All reasonable measures will be taken to finalise the process as soon as practicable.

5.8 The recipient of the grievance, or their delegate, will then, if necessary, seek to clarify the outcome that the complainant hopes to achieve. Such clarification may be sought by written or verbal request or by a face-to-face interview with the complainant. When such clarification occurs in a face-to-face interview, the complainant or respondent may ask that another person accompany them.

5.9 The recipient of the grievance or their delegate will then endeavour to resolve the grievance and will provide a written report to the complainant on the steps taken to address the grievance, including the reasons for the decision, within ten (10) working days. The report will further advise the complainant of their right to access the internal appeals process if they are not satisfied with the outcome of their formal grievance.

5.10 Where the grievance is of an academic nature that does not relate to the review of results or grades, the grievance will be treated under the Stage One: Formal Academic Grievance process of this policy.

5.11 Once the non-academic grievance is investigated, the recipient of the grievance will report and outcome to the student for notification.

5.12 The recipient of the grievance will also log the details of the grievance on the Complaints register.

5.13 Students dissatisfied with the out pf the Formal Non-Academic Grievance may proceed to Stage Two Internal Appeal (Non-academic).

Stage One: Formal Academic Grievance

5.14 Formal academic grievances must be submitted in writing and marked to the



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attention of the Academic Director as follows:

The Academic Director
Australian Guild of Education
376 Victoria St
North Melbourne
3051, VIC

○ Complainants may use the *Student Grievance and Appeal Form* or write an email or letter. The complainant should contact support@guildmusic.edu.au and request the private email address of the Academic Director.

- 5.15 Receipt of the academic grievance will be acknowledged in writing. The grievance handling process will commence within ten (10) working days of the receipt of the formal grievance. All reasonable measures will be taken to finalise the process as soon as practicable.
- 5.16 The Registrar (or the Equivalent Officer), or their delegate, will then, if necessary, seek to clarify the outcome that the complainant hopes to achieve. Such clarification may be sought by written or verbal request or by a face-to-face interview with the complainant. When such clarification occurs in a face-to-face interview, the complainant or respondent may ask that another person accompany them.
- 5.17 The Academic Director or their delegate will then endeavour to resolve the grievance and will provide a written report to the complainant on the steps taken to address the grievance, including the reasons for the decision, within ten (10) working days. The report will further advise the complainant of their right to access the internal appeals process if they are not satisfied with the outcome of their formal grievance.
- 5.18 Where the grievance is with regards to a review of a grade or appeal of a grade the student will be directed to follow the *Assessment Policy and Procedure* unless they have already followed such a process.
- 5.19 Once the grievance is investigated, the Registrar (or the Equivalent Officer) will report an outcome to the student for notification.
- 5.20 The Registrar (or the Equivalent Officer) will also log the details of the complaint on AGE's Complaints Register.
- 5.21 Students dissatisfied with the outcome of the Formal Academic Grievance may proceed to stage two Internal Appeal (Academic).

Stage Two: Internal Appeal (Academic)

- 5.22 If a complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of their formal academic grievance, they may lodge a written appeal within ten (10) working days of receiving notification of the outcome of their formal grievance with the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) as follows:



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The CEO
Australian Guild of Education
376 Victoria St
North Melbourne
3051, VIC

○ Complainants may use the Student Grievance and Appeal Form or write an email or letter. The complainant should contact support@guildmusic.edu.au and request the private email address of the CEO.

5.23 The CEO or their delegate will request the Chair of the Academic Board to consult with the complainant and other relevant parties within ten (10) working days.

5.24 Where possible such consultations should take the form of face-to-face interviews. The complainant or the respondent may ask another person (who cannot act in the capacity of a legal practitioner) to accompany them to these interviews.

5.25 Following the consultation, the CEO or their delegate will provide a written report to the complainant advising the further steps taken to address the grievance, including the reasons for the decision, within ten (10) working days. The report will further advise the complainant of their right to access the external appeals process if they are not satisfied with the outcome of their internal appeal.

5.26 The student must have exhausted all internal appeals before proceeding to stage three of the appeals process.

Stage Two: Internal Appeal (Non-Academic)

5.27 If a complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of their formal non-academic grievance, they may lodge an appeal within twenty (20) working days of receiving notification of the outcome of their formal grievance to the CEO as follows:

The CEO
Australian Guild of Education
376 Victoria St
North Melbourne
3051, VIC

○ Complainants may use the *Student Grievance and Appeal Form* or write an email or letter. The complainant should contact support@guildmusic.edu.au and request the private email address of the CEO.

5.28 The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or delegate will consult with the complainant and other relevant parties within ten (10) working days.

5.29 Where possible such consultations should take the form of face-to-face interviews. The complainant or the respondent may ask another person (who is not a legal practitioner)



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to accompany them to these interviews.

5.30 Following the consultation, the CEO or delegate will provide a written report to the complainant advising the further steps taken to address the grievance, including the reasons for the decision, within ten (10) working days. The report will further advise the complainant of their right to access the external appeals process if they are not satisfied with the outcome of their internal appeal.

5.31 Before proceeding to stage three of the appeals process the student must have exhausted all internal appeals first.

Stage Three: External Appeal (International Students only – Ombudsman)

5.32 If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of their internal appeal and they are an international student, they may lodge an external appeal by contacting the Overseas Students Ombudsman.

5.33 The Overseas Students Ombudsman offers a free and independent service for international students who have a grievance or seek to lodge an external appeal about a decision made by AGE.

o The Overseas Students Ombudsman considers grievances relating to [Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018](#) (National Code 2018) and AGE's policies and procedures relating to the following matters:

- (a) being refused admission to a course;
- (b) course fees and due dates;
- (c) course or provider transfers;
- (d) being reported for failure to meet course progression or attendance requirements (for ELICOS students);
- (e) cancellation of enrolment;
- (f) accommodation or work arranged by a provider; and
- (g) incorrect advice is given by a provider's Education Agent.

5.34 The Ombudsman considers cases of inaction or delay, for example, failure of a provider to issue student results within the normal timeframes, or failure to provide services that were included in the student's written agreement with the education provider. Refer to the Overseas Students Ombudsman website at www.ombudsman.gov.au/How-we-can-help/overseas-students or phone 1300 362 072 for more information.

5.35 AGE agrees to be bound by any recommendations from the Overseas Students Ombudsman, and the Chief Executive Officer will ensure that any recommendations made are implemented within thirty (30) days of receipt of such recommendations.



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Stage Three: External Appeal (Domestic Students, and International Students where the matter is not covered by the Overseas Students Ombudsman)

5.36 If not satisfied with the decision in Stage Two, and the matter is not within the purview of the Overseas Students Ombudsman, the complainant or AGE may request that the matter be dealt with through an external dispute resolution process via [Independent Higher Education Australia](#) (IHEA).

- o The contact details for IHEA are:

Suite 612, Level 6
198 Harbour Esplanade
Docklands VIC 3008
(03) 9642 5212
<https://iheau.edu.au/> | info@iheau.edu.au

- o Marking the email to the attention of the IHEA CEO.

5.37 IHEA will appoint an external reviewer with an appropriate background who is acceptable to both parties.

5.38 The process is as follows:

- (a) An application will be made by AGE in writing to the Chief Executive Officer of IHEA, detailing the grievance, the process applied as at that point in time, the decision to be reviewed and grounds for an external review of the decision.
- (b) The complainant will not, at any stage in the process, be in any way discriminated against or victimised, and in any meeting may be accompanied and assisted by a third party if that is their wish. The complainant will be advised of the cost, if any, for utilising the external grievance appeals process.
- (c) The IHEA appointed reviewer must make a determination and advise the relevant senior officer of AGE, the complainant and IHEA within thirty (30) days, providing in writing the reasons and rationale for any decisions and/or actions to be taken.

5.39 The cost of fees incurred from the external bodies will be borne at 50% each by both the complainant and AGE.

Further Action

5.40 If a grievance remains unresolved after the external dispute resolution process, the complainant may decide to refer the matter to an external agency such as the Anti-Discrimination Board, Australian Competition and Consumer Commission or the Office of Fair Trading or Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA).

5.41 The procedures set out in this document do not replace or modify procedures or any other responsibilities that may arise under other policies or under statute or any other law. Nothing in this policy and procedure limits the rights of individuals to take action under



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Australia's Consumer Protection laws. Also, these procedures do not circumscribe an individual's rights to pursue other legal remedies.

Enrolment Status

- 5.42 Where a current student chooses to access this policy and procedure, AGE will maintain that person's enrolment while the grievance handling process is ongoing.

Record Keeping, Confidentiality and Reporting

- 5.43 A written record of all grievances handled under this policy and procedure and their outcomes shall be maintained for at least five (5) years to allow all parties to the grievance appropriate access to these records, upon written request to the Registrar (or the Equivalent Officer). These records will be maintained at:

Australian Guild of Education
376 Victoria St
North Melbourne
3051, VIC

- 5.44 All records relating to grievances will be treated as confidential and will be covered by AGE's *Privacy and Personal Information Policy and Procedure*.
- 5.45 All formal academic grievances will be reported to the Academic Board whilst maintaining student confidentiality.
- 5.46 All formal non-academic grievances will be reported to AGE's Executive Management Committee.
- 5.47 A summary reporting showing the effectiveness of the grievances process will be reported to the Board of Directors annually.

Approval, Publication and Training

- 5.48 This policy and procedure will be made available to students and persons seeking to enrol with AGE through publication on the Learning Management System (LMS) and on AGE's website (www.guildmusic.edu.au).
- 5.49 For the purposes of communicating to and training staff, this policy and procedure will form part of the staff induction process.

Reviewable Decisions

- 5.50 AGE must acknowledge receipt of an application for review of a reviewable decision in writing and inform the applicant that, if the reviewer has not advised the applicant of a decision within 45 days of receiving the application for review, the reviewer is taken to have confirmed the original decision.



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- 5.51 The reviewer of a reviewable decision must inform applicants of their right to apply to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal for a review of the reviewable decision that has been confirmed, varied or set aside under Section 209-5 or Section 209-10 of the Act, and provide the contact details of the closest Administrative Appeals Registry and the approximate costs of lodging an appeal with the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

6 Related Legislation and Documents

Institute Documents

6.1 The following documents are related to this policy and procedure:

- (a) Privacy and Personal Information Policy and Procedure
- (b) Student Grievance and Appeal Form.

Applicable External Standards and Codes

6.2 This policy and procedure complies with the following standards and codes:

Standards/Code	Standards/Clauses
Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 (www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2021L00488)	Under <i>Standard 2 – Learning Environment</i> : ▶ Standard 2.4
Higher Education Support Act 2003 (www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2022C00005)	Under <i>Subdivision 19-D – The Fairness Requirements</i> : ▶ Clause 19-45 ▶ Clause 19-50 ▶ Clause 19-55

7 Feedback

- AGE staff and students may provide feedback about this document by emailing support@guildmusic.edu.au or such feedback to be incorporated into a future review.



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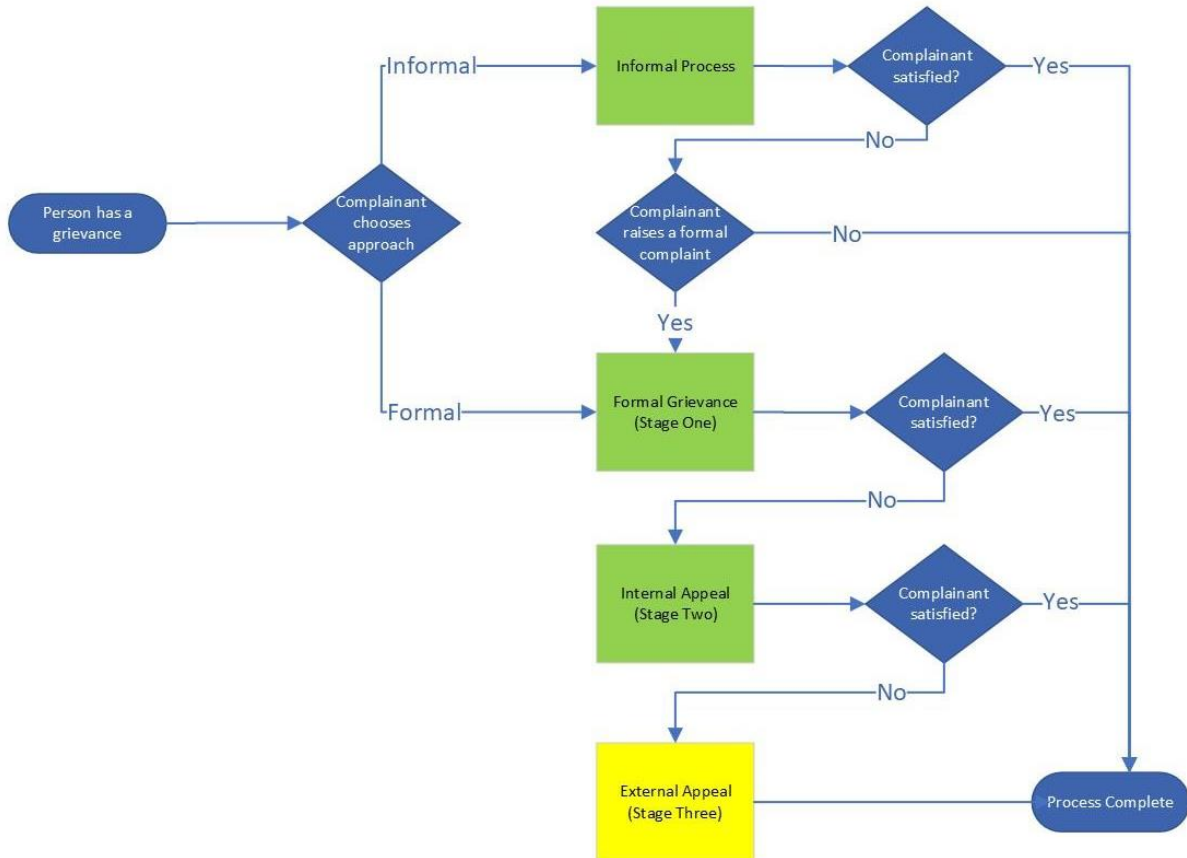
8 Document Control

Approval Review	Details
Governing authority	Academic Board
Responsible officer	Academic Director
Endorsed by	Board of Directors
Date of approval	22 March 2024
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Updated	NA
Review date	1 April 2027
Version	V1_Est 2024



9 Appendix: Process Flow Charts

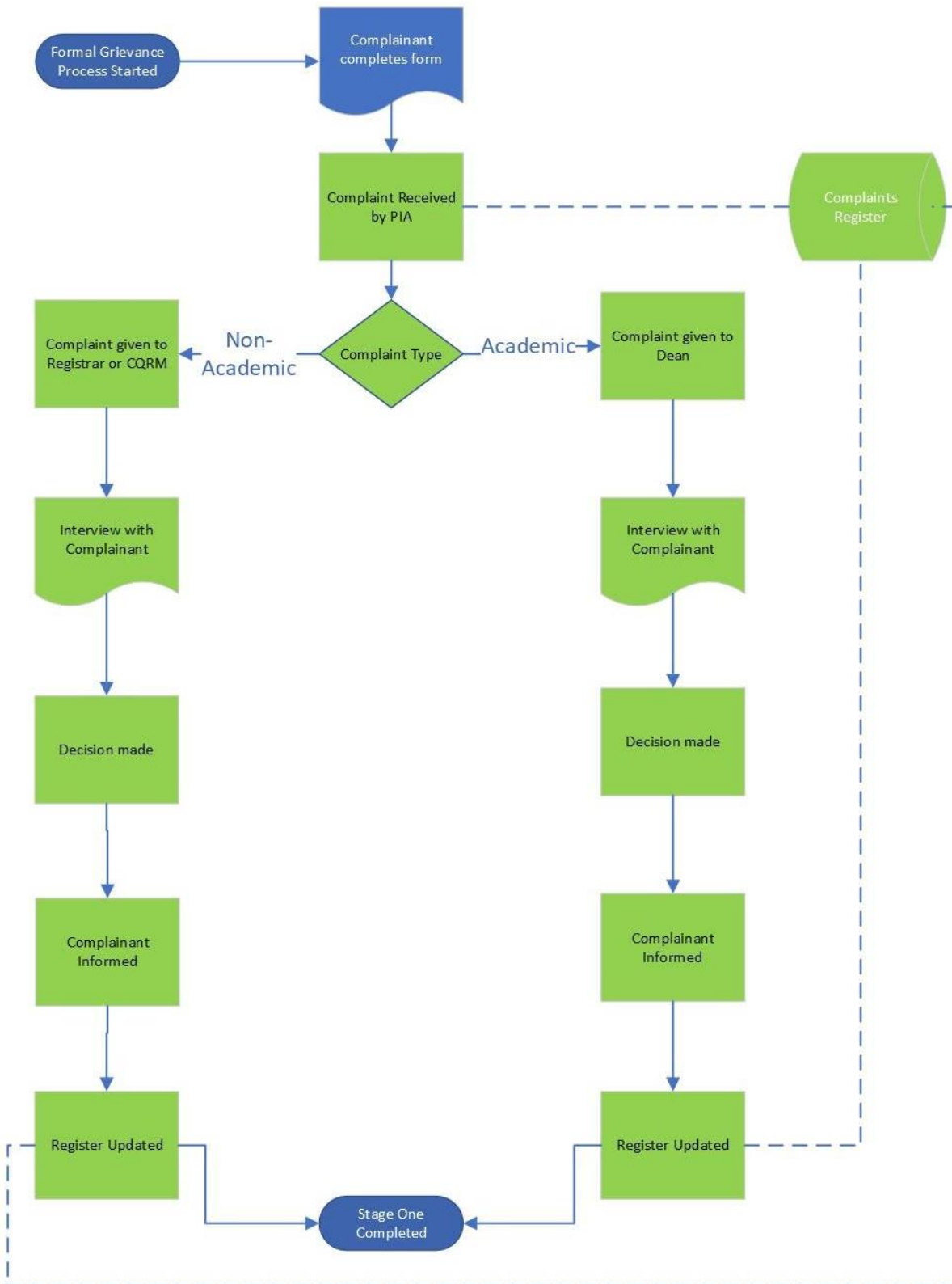
Overall Grievance Process – All Stages





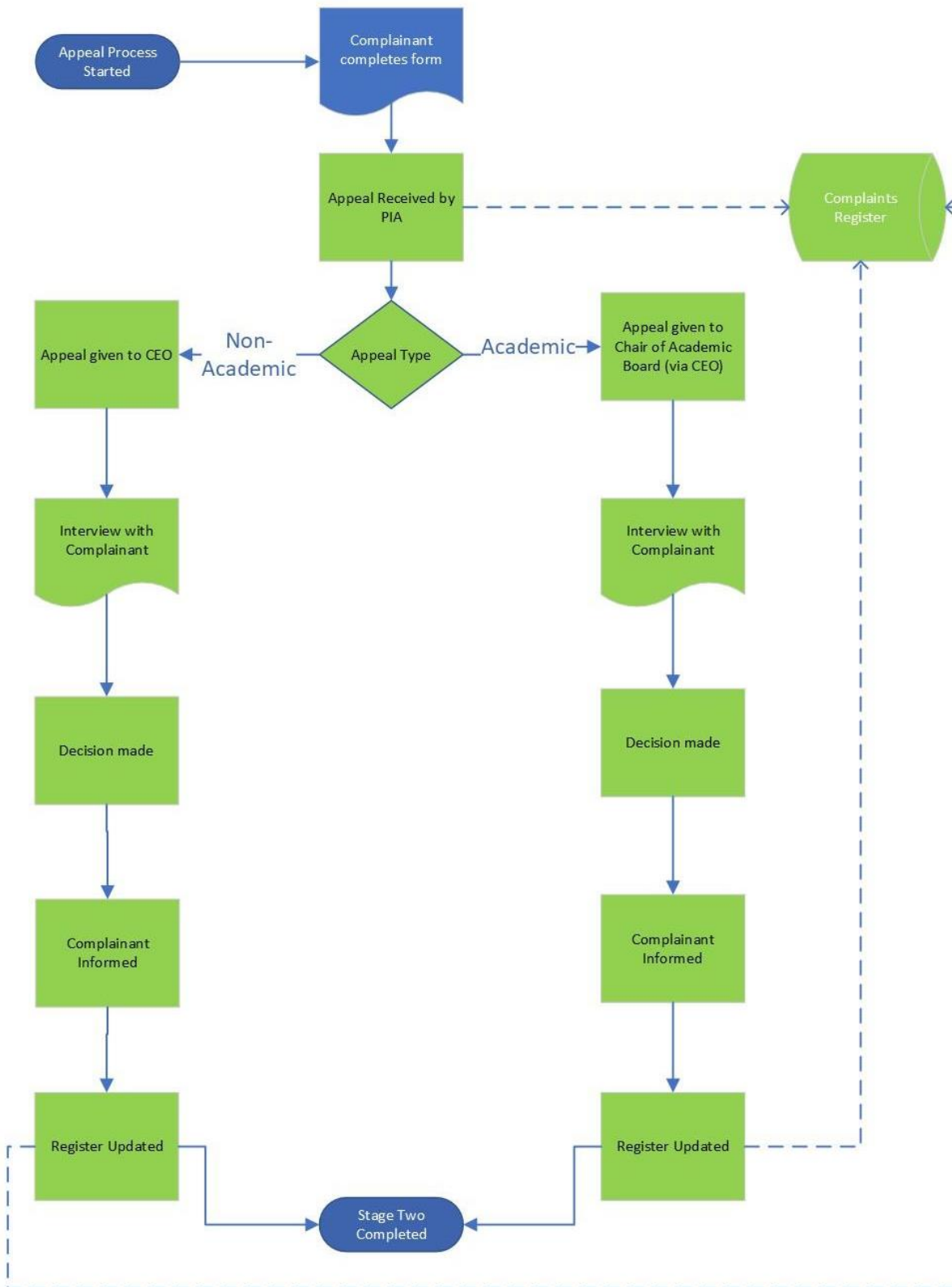
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Grievance Process Stage 1 – Formal Grievance/Complaint





Grievance Process Stage 2 – Internal Appeal





Grievance Process Stage 3 – External Appeal

